THE CENSUS OF ANTIQUE WORKS OF ART
AND ARCHITECTURE KNOWN TO THE RENAISSANCE

The *Census of Antique Works of Art and Architecture known to the Renaissance* is a joint venture of the Warburg Institute in London and the Bibliotheca Hertziana, an institute of the German Max Planck-Gesellschaft, in Rome. With the generous support of the Getty Art History Information Program over about ten years the two Institutes have started to build a scholarly database including all ancient monuments, which were known during the period from 1400 to around 1550, i.e. from architecture and sculpture to applied arts which are documented in visual or written sources of the Renaissance, such as drawings, prints, statuettes or printed guidebooks, letters, manuscripts etc.

The project was founded in 1946 by Fritz Saxl, then Director of the Warburg Institute, together with Karl Lehmann-Hartleben, then Director of the Institute of Fine Arts in New York, and Richard Krautheimer, who was then working, in collaboration with his wife Trude Krautheimer-Hess, on their monograph of the Florentine sculptor Lorenzo Ghiberti. Initially the *Census* collected only information on figurative monuments.

When the Hertziana joined in 1981 the project was extended to include architecture, and new aspects, springing from recent developments in scholarly approaches to the Nachleben of the antique, were added. The project could be continued and computerized thanks to the generous support of AHIP since 1982. Over 10,500 computer records on ancient MONUMENTS and over 20,500 records on RENAISSANCE DOCUMENTS have so far been entered into the *Census* database; the present version of the interactive dual videodisk linked to the database contains 25,000 images.

The *Census* provides for example information to archaeologists on the ancient and modern history of famous monuments like the Pantheon, the Colosseum, the Laocoon, the Apollo Belvedere in Rome and even on the Parthenon in Athens as well as on less famous artefacts like coins, pots or architectural fragments, on ancient buildings or statues which are no longer preserved today like the Septizodium or the so-called *Letto di Policleto*. Findspots of bases, capitals or cornices or of pieces of sculpture are recorded.

The information on the provenance of antique works allows the reconstruction of entire Renaissance Collections which previously required a great deal of research. The sequence of previous states of preservation of ancient works of art can be visually followed almost like in a slow motion picture by e.g. displaying the series of the various representations of a piece of sculpture one after another.

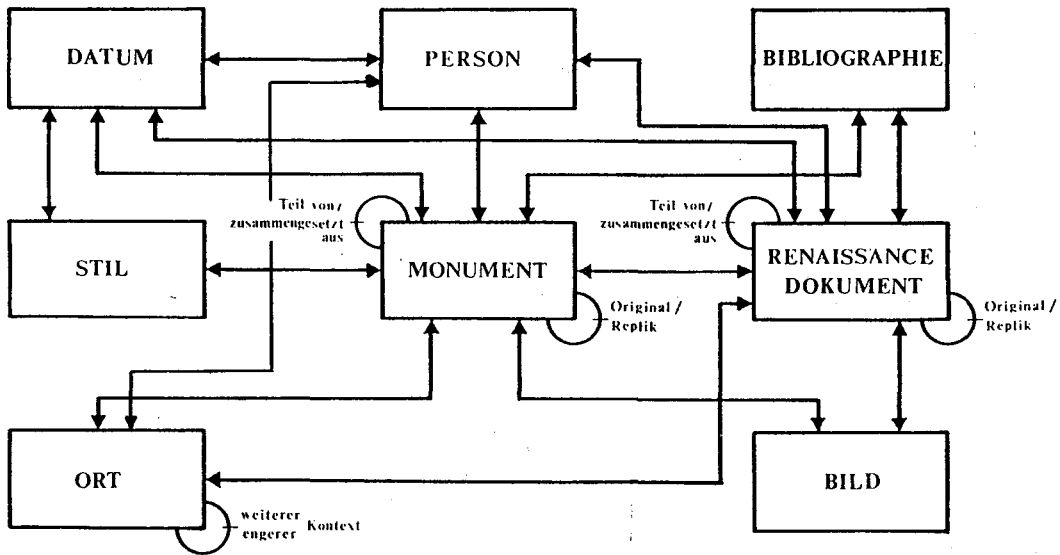# Census
Datenstrukturdiagramm

Fig. 1 — Diagram illustrating the data structure of the *Census* database.

To put the recognition of the influence of classical art on a firmer footing it is essential for the art historian to establish which monument was actually known and could be studied by artists at a given point in time and under which conditions. The various interpretations of the remains of the classical heritage expressed in the names given to buildings or statues paint a lively picture of the beginning of our modern tradition of scholarship. Imagine the horsetamers on the Quirinal in Rome (Fig. 2) whose meaning shifted from being regarded as a symbol of eternity to an interpretation of portraits of two ancient philosophers and then to a portrait of Alexander the Great, finally (and correctly) being recognized as a representation of the Dioscuri.

A great achievement in the design of the *Census* database from an archaeological and art historical point of view is the dual image component. It enables among many others a comparison on the screen of a photograph of an ancient monument and a depiction of it in a Renaissance drawing (Figg. 2 and 3), print, etc. or of two Renaissance drawings, for example by two different artists, or an architectural detail and its location in the context of a building. Every combination of images is possible so that the scholar can work with the computer
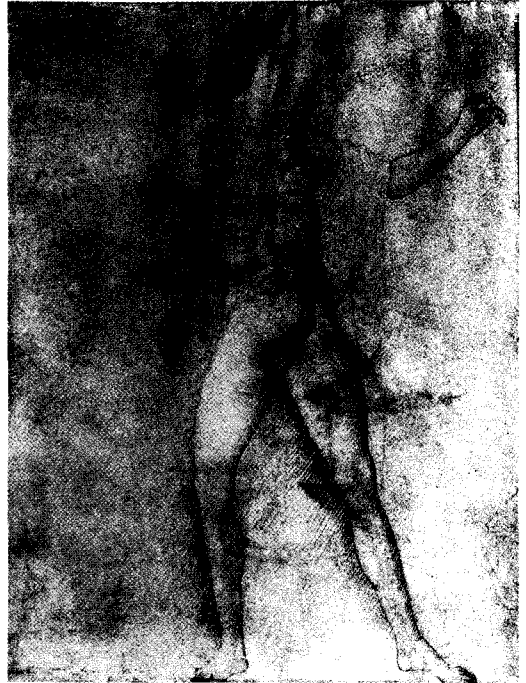
Fig. 2 — Horsetamer of the OPUS PHIDIAE; Rome, Piazza del Quirinale.
Fig. 3 — Pisanello: Drawing after the Horsetamer of the OPUS PHIDIAE; Milan, Biblioteca
Ambrosiana.

in the same way he is used to work with his books and his photographs, but much more rapidly and accurately (Figg. 2-5).

The *Census* has always drawn inspiration from its image component, and photographs were always an essential part of the project, in fact it grew out of the Photo Collection at the Warburg Institute. Therefore the implementation of our dual videodisk was almost a *conditio sine qua non* from the very beginning of the computerization of the *Census*, and this approach was supported by AHIP as a pilot entreprise. After the demonstrations of the data entry system in 1983 and 1984 the first version of our retrieval system could be successfully demonstrated in March 1992 in a conference at the Warburg Institute. Some areas have not been addressed yet in this first version and await a solution in the future. We also still need to improve the formal description in the textual part of our database, and we shall need to break more new ground by implementing the system we have devised to tackle this particular problem. The

Fig. 4 — Andrea del Castagno: David (adaptation of the Horsetamer of the OPUS PHIDIAE); Washington, National Gallery.
Fig. 5 — Pedagogue of the Niobids (restored by adapting the pose of the Horsetamer of the OPUS PHIDIAE), Florence, Uffizi.

two identical copies of our analog videodisk are currently a very efficient and economical method to fullfil scholarly needs of the *Census.*

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